

SELF CARE

Cardiovascular Disease & Sudden Cardiac Arrest Facts

Knowing the facts about cardiovascular disease and cardiac arrest makes a big difference in the way a person views the difference between life and death. Many people think they know the facts but do they really know the impact cardiovascular disease and cardiac arrest has on society.

Cardiovascular Disease

- Cardiovascular disease is the No. 1 killer of adults in the United States, responsible for about 960,000 deaths annually. Cardiovascular diseases claim more lives than the next seven leading causes of death combined, including cancer, accidents, influenza and pneumonia, and diabetes.
- One in five Americans has some form of cardiovascular disease.
- The cost of cardiovascular diseases in 2002 is estimated to be \$329.2 billion in direct costs, such as hospital visits, and indirect costs, such as lost productivity.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest

- Sudden cardiac arrest (caused by ventricular fibrillation) suffered in settings outside the hospital is responsible for about 250,000 adult deaths annually in the United States. Each day more than 680 Americans die from sudden cardiac arrest.
- Sudden cardiac arrest is most often caused by an abnormal heart rhythm called ventricular fibrillation (VF). VF usually results from cardiovascular disease but may also result from electrocution or near-drowning.
- When sudden cardiac arrest occurs, the victim collapses, becomes unresponsive to gentle shaking, stops normal breathing and has no signs of circulation such as normal breathing, coughing or movement.
- About 95 percent of sudden cardiac arrest victims die before reaching the hospital.
- Effective bystander CPR, provided immediately after sudden cardiac arrest, can double a victim's chance of survival.

Contact the American Heart Association at www.americanheart.org for more information.



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